

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
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USIA-06 OMB-01 TRSE-00 ACDA-07 SSM-03 IO-13 MCT-01
ORM-02 DHA-02 EB-07 /104 W
-----072566 241021Z /14

P R 240838Z JUN 77
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4378
INFO SIT-REP COLLECTIVE 264
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER
USNMR SHAPE BELGIUM
CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON ENG
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GER
COMSIXTHFLT
CTF SIX ZERO
CTF SIX ONE
CTF SIX TWO
CTG SIX ZERO PT TWO
FICEURLANT NORFOLK VA
FOSIF ROTA SPAIN
DIA WASHDC
CINCUSAREUR HEIDELBERG GER
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES IT

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BEIRUT 3002

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS PINT MILI LE
SUBJ: LEBANESE SITUATION JUNE 17-23

REF: BEIRUT 2889 (DTG 171055Z JUN 77)

1. SUMMARY: IN SOUTH LEBANON THIS WEEK ARTILLERY SHELLING
AND OTHER MINOR INCIDENTS CONTINUED, AS TENSIONS REMAINED
HIGH BUT SIGNS OF ESCALATION REMAINED REMOTE. THE PLO HAS
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UNDERTAKEN A POLITICAL INITIATIVE TOWARDS THE LEBANESE
GOVERNMENT AND LEBANESE RIGHTISTS, WHICH HAS MET WITH LIMITED
ENTHUSIASM. FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS TESTIFIED BEFORE
PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES AND IS VISITING DAMASCUS. LIBYAN
FOREIGN MINISTER TURAYKI CLAIMS TO HAVE WON LEBANESE ACQUI-
ESCENCE IN THE IDEA OF AN ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT. WALID JUMBLATT
PLANS TO VISIT LIBYA AND SAUDI ARABIA SEEKING FUNDS TO PAY

BLOOD DEBTS TO THE CHRISTIANS, AND PIERRE GEMAYEL WILL HEAD A LARGE PHALANGIST DELEGATION TO SAUDI ARABIA IN A FEW DAYS. CAMILLE CHAMOUN VISITED JORDAN. THERE WAS AN INCIDENT INVOLVING ASF TROOPS AND CHAMOUNIST MILITIA IN ASHRAFIYAH INVOLVING SEVERAL INJURIES. THE SYRIANS CONTINUE TO CONSOLIDATE THEIR CONTROL IN THE BEKAA. A NEXT SYRIAN STEP IN LEBANON MAY BE TO COLLECT LIGHT WEAPONS. PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS AND THE ARAB FUND PRESIDENT ESTIMATE THE TOTAL COST OF RECONSTRUCTION IN LEBANON AT ABOUT \$10 BILLION. SHIA IMAM MOUSSA SADR IS CONCERNED ABOUT SHIA SUPPORT FOR HIS RIVAL, IMAM MOHSEN SHIRAZI. END SUMMARY.

2. SOUTH LEBANON SITUATION.

EXCHANGES OF ARTILLERY AND OTHER INCIDENTS CONTINUED IN THE SOUTH DURING THE WEEK. ALTHOUGH NOT CONFIRMED BY EMBASSY SOURCES, ISRAELI ARTILLERY FIRE INTO LEBANON WAS REPORTED BY REUTERS, AND THE VOICE OF PALESTINE RADIO IN CAIRO CLAIMED THAT THE ISRAELIS WERE USING 175MM AND 155MM GUNS LOCATED IN MISGAV'UM AND METULLA. ON JUNE 17 ISRAELI AIRCRAFT FLEW OVER PARTS OF SOUTH LEBANON, INCLUDING SIDON, TYRE, NABATIYAH, AND MARJAYUN. THE PFLP CLAIMED IN AN UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT "ISOLATIONIST-ZIONIST FORCES," LED BY MAJOR HADDAD AND OPERATING OUT OF ISRAELI TERRITORY, ENCIRCLES AND ENTERED THE VILLAGE KAFR SHUBA. VARIOUS REPORTS THROUGH THE WEEK CLAIMED THAT FIGHTING CONTINUES BETWEEN REJECTIONISTS ON THE ONE

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HAND AND BOTH SAIQA AND ELEMENTS OF THE PFLP-GC ON THE OTHER IN THE VICINITY OF SIDON. A DEPUTY FROM NABATIYAH HAS TOLD US BOTH THAT MANY LEBANESE PEOPLE IN THE SOUTH BELIEVE THAT THE AMERICANS ARE HELPING THE PALESTINIANS AND THE SYRIANS TO FIGHT THE "LEBANESE FORCES," AND THAT THE PALESTINIANS BELIEVE THAT THE U.S. IS ENCOURAGING ISRAEL TO ATTACK SOUTH LEBANON.

3. PALESTINIAN POLITICAL INITIATIVE IN LEBANON.

FATAH COUNCIL MEMBER HANI AL-HASAN, ACCOMPANIED BY FORMER PRIME MINISTER ABDULLAH YAFI, CALLED ON PRESIDENT SARKIS AND ON CHRISTIAN MILITIA LEADER BECHIR GEMAYEL. THE PHALANGIST NEWSPAPER AL AMAL REPORTED JUNE 19 THAT THE PALESTINIANS HAD PROPOSED A CEASE-FIRE IN SOUTH LEBANON AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF JOINT PALESTINIAN-LEBANESE PATROLS TO ENFORCE IT. AN NAHAR JUNE 19 REPORTED THAT HASAN ALSO DISCUSSED WITH THE LEBANESE THE QUESTION OF TRANSFER OF PALESTINIAN REFUGEES FROM DAMOUR TO THE SOUTH, AND PROPOSED A JOINT LEBANESE-PALESTINIAN MEETING IN DAMASCUS TO DISCUSS THE CAIRO ACCORD. CAMILLE CHAMOUN COMMENTED JUNE 22 THAT, SHOULD ANYTHING HAPPEN IN THE SOUTH, IT WILL BE THE EXCLUSIVE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PALESTINIANS.

4. BOUTROS.

FOREIGN MINISTER BOUTROS MET WITH THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS
AND DEFENSE COMMITTEES OF THE PARLIAMENT JUNE 20 AND 21.
ON SOUTH LEBANON, HE SAID THAT THE UNITED STATES HAD NOT
GIVEN "GUARANTEES" BUT RATHER "ASSURANCES" THAT THE ISRAELIS
WOULD NOT ATTACK AND DESCRIBED SOUTH LEBANON AS A "JOINT
ARAB RESPONSIBILITY." BOUTROS IS VISITING DAMASCUS JUNE 23
AND REPORTEDLY WILL DISCUSS THE SITUATION IN SOUTH LEBANON,
THE CAIRO ACCORD, ARAB AID TO LEBANON, LEBANESE POLITICAL
RECONCILIATION, AND REORGANIZATION OF THE LEBANESE ARMY.
HE IS EXPECTED SOON TO ALSO VISIT SAUDI ARABIA, KUWAIT, AND
EGYPT.

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5. LIBYAN ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT INITIATIVE.

LIBYAN FOREIGN MINISTER TURAYKI VISITED LEBANON JUNE 17, AND CLAIMED HE HAD WON LEBANESE ACQUIESCENCE IN THE IDEA OF AN ARAB LEAGUE SUMMIT MEETING TO TAKE PLACE AT TRIPOLI ON JULY 20. HOWEVER, FOLLOWING EGYPTIAN OPPOSITION TO A SUMMIT AT THIS TIME, THE GOL REGARDS A SUMMIT IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE AS UNLIKELY.

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6. POLITICAL TRAVELERS.

PSP LEADER WALID JUMBLATT HAS TOLD AN EMBASSY EMPLOYEE THAT HE IS GOING TO LIBYA, AS WELL AS SAUDI ARABIA. HE DESCRIBED LIBYANS THESE DAYS AS "VERY TOUCHY." HE HOPES TO RAISE MONEY TO PAY OFF BLOOD FEUD DEBTS TO THE CHRISTIANS RESULTING FROM THE DRUZE MASSACRE OF CHRISTIANS IN THE CHOUF FOLLOWING HIS FATHER'S ASSASSINATION IN MARCH. PIERRE GEMAYEL IS ALSO VISITING SAUDI ARABIA, BEGINNING JUNE 25, AT THE INVITATION OF THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT, AT THE HEAD OF A LARGE PHALANGIST DELEGATION. CAMILLE CHAMOUN SPENT THE WEEKEND OF JUNE 17-19 IN JORDAN AND HAD SEVERAL MEETINGS WITH KING HUSSEIN. BEFORE HIS TRIP, ACCORDING TO EMBASSY CONTACTS, PRESIDENT SARKIS TOLD CHAMOUN THAT HE INTENDED TO RESIGN IF THE SITUATION IN LEBANON DID NOT IMPROVE, AND THAT CHAMOUN REPLIED THAT, IF HE IS SERIOUS, HE SHOULD ADVISE THE LEBANESE FRONT "WHICH SHALL HANDLE IT CAREFULLY."

7. ASF ACTIVITIES.

BOTH SAUDI RADIO AND A LOCAL SOURCE REPORT THERE WAS A CLASH IN ASHRAFIYAH JUNE 17 BETWEEN ASF ELEMENTS AND A GROUP FROM THE CHAMOUNITS NATIONAL LIBERAL PARTY, AS A RESULT OF WHICH SEVERAL SYRIAN SOLDIERS AND NLP MILITIA MEN WERE INJURED. SAUDI RADIO SAYS THAT THE INCIDENT TOOK PLACE OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE OF DORY CHAMOUN. IN THE BEKAA, GOVERNOR LAHOUD HAS TOLD AN EMBASSY LOCAL EMPLOYEE THAT RESISTING TRIBES IN THE HERMEL AREA WERE PERSUADED TO ACCEPT SYRIAN AUTHORITY AFTER THE TRIBAL CHIEF WAS ARRESTED BY THE SYRIANS AND SUBJECTED TO SOME THIRD-DEGREE TREATMENT. ACCORDING TO LAHOUD, THE SYRIAN ACTION HAS PUT AN END TO SMUGGLING OF HASHISH AND WEAPONS AS WELL AS BANDITRY IN THE AREA. THE SYRIAN NEWSPAPER TISHRIIN REPORTED THAT PREPARATIONS

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WERE UNDERWAY FOR THE NEXT STAGE OF PACIFICATION IN LEBANON,
NAMELY THE COLLECTION OF LIGHT WEAPONS.

8. ESTIMATING THE COST OF RECONSTRUCTION.

ANWAR JUNE 23 REPORTED THAT SAEB JAROUDI, PRESIDENT OF THE ARAB FUND FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, ESTIMATES THAT THE COST OF RECONSTRUCTION IN LEBANON WILL BE ABOUT 30 BILLION POUNDS (OR \$10 BILLION). PRIME MINISTER AL-HOSS JUNE 18 MADE A SIMILAR ESTIMATE--ABOUT 33 BILLION POUNDS. HOSS SAID THAT SO FAR, IN ADDITION TO SOME \$69 MILLION AID FROM THE UNITED STATES, LEBANON HAS RECEIVED \$50 MILLION FROM SAUDI ARABIA AND \$33 MILLION FROM KUWAIT, AND 31 MILLION ACCOUNTING UNITS FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET. JAROUDI SAID THAT THE ARAB FUND HAD ALREADY MADE A LOAN OF SOME 122 MILLION POUNDS TO LEBANON TO CONSTRUCT A FOURTH BASIN AT THE BEIRUT PORT AND TO REPAIR AND EXPAND LEBANON'S ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS, AND THAT OTHER LOANS WOULD FOLLOW.

9. SHIA POLITICS.

WE UNDERSTAND FROM A CONSERVATIVE DEPUTY FROM BAABDA THAT SHIA IMAM MOUSSA SADR IS BEGINNING TO RESENT THE SUCCESS OF HIS RIVAL IMAM MOHSEN SHIRAZI, WHO IS BEING BACKED BY MOHSEN SLIM, HOUSE SPEAKER KAMAL ASSAD, AND SHIA CHAMOUNIST DEPUTY KAZIM KHALIL.
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